

2019-2020 Arts Information

Grades 7 & 8

Music

Each semester, 7th and 8th Grade Music students embark on a 10-Part musical curriculum. Each part occurs during a structured academic week (Days 1 - 7), wherein radically diverse activities and projects revolve around special central themes, composers, cultures, and musical concepts. Students explore these themes through music theory activities, group discussions, research projects, creative composing sessions, and structured group rehearsals. Throughout the semester, music classes focus regularly on rehearsing core musical pieces for Handchimes and Handbells. Students also select instruments to play, creating a small class ensemble. All work culminates in final performances and a sharing of student creations and repertoire.

Drama

Middle school drama students will learn the fundamentals of acting through theatre games, exercises, and performance. An exploration of the actor's tools – voice, body, and imagination—will be emphasized. In particular, improvisation will be employed to sharpen students' presence, awareness, and spontaneity. Ensemble and individual acting skills will develop through in-class performance and feedback. Theater terms, history, and production elements will be discussed. The end of each semester will feature a performance of student-acted scenes.

Visual Art

Visual Art class will have the opportunity to enhance their natural abilities in drawing, painting, and sculpture while learning many useful skills and techniques. With an emphasis on hands-on and choice-based arts, the students are given time to practice the new art form, then asked to create a finished product with a media of their own choosing. We study three forms of sculpture, free-standing, relief and suspended. Drawing skills are practiced using the Renaissance Grid. Students are exposed to both abstract and realistic artists. All visual arts students will create an iPad art journal documenting their efforts through photography and written expression.

Digital Media Arts

Students will be challenged to express ideas through digital media technology. They will explore a wide range of programs and applications to create images, photographs, videos, websites, and more. The artists will learn to use the various software and transfer it to other classes, projects and interests. Students will have the opportunity to work individually as well as collaboratively, while giving consideration to their intended audience, mode of expression and editing skills. The digital art class will display art work at the Middle School Arts Night at the end of each semester.

Weaving

Students will be introduced to weaving on a floor loom in the weaving studio. The class will explore various fibers, colors, textures, and weaving patterns. Working on their own levels, students will have their opportunity to develop their technique and creative skills while weaving on a floor loom. Students can weave as many projects as time allows, and are encouraged to enter their finished projects in competition at the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival in May. The weaving class will display art work at the Middle School Arts Night at the end of each semester.

Movement

The movement class explores a variety of American Dance styles through the elements of dance. A high emphasis on modern technique and improvisation is used to guide students in creating original movement compositions and choreography. Some dance pioneers and world styles are examined and students learn about world renowned dance pioneers and their influence on the Art form. The semester culminates in a performance of class pieces and student driven choreography at the Middle School Arts Night.

Chorus (Fall Semester Only)

This arts class is being offered in cooperation with the Upper School, and participants will be comprised of students from both Divisions. Students are expected to participate in performances. However, they need not be accomplished singers, they just need to attend and try their best. The chorus performs at school assemblies, Friends House and other places at various times during the semester, including the holidays. Participation in an evening performance will be required.

Coding and More (Spring Semester Only)

This class will introduce students to the fundamentals of block coding using online programs like [Code.org](https://code.org) and Scratch, iPad apps like ScratchJr and Swift Playgrounds, and 3D programming apps like Alice 3 and Tinkercad. Students will also learn to work through and solve a variety of design challenge problems to hone their interpersonal/collaborative and problem-solving skills. Finally, students will also pursue a Google-inspired "20 Time" independent study of a topic of their own choice, assemble their findings in a cumulative ePortfolio, and present their findings during an end-of-semester class presentation.

Design Thinking (Fall Semester Only)

Simply stated, Design Thinking is a creative and collaborative way of tackling virtually any kind of problem. This class, inspired by Stanford's D School, [IDEO.org](https://www.ideo.org/) and Project Zero asks student teams to first connect to problems on an emotional level, then solve them through a logical and flexible process of sketching, prototyping, testing, and trying out concepts and ideas. Students will use this process to solve a variety of design challenges including redesigning a common household object/routine (Before-school routine, chair, bunk bed, desk, etc.), improving a middle school object/process (classroom floor plan, school lost & found bin, etc.) and, finally, a societal issue (appreciating diversity, recycling/reusing plastic bags, etc.).

Independent Study in the Arts (Spring Semester Only)

This option allows 8th grade students with a particular interest in a facet of the arts to spend the spring semester delving into a deeper understanding and appreciation of their passion (e.g., music, dance, visual art, etc.). Students who express an interest in the ISA option, must prepare a proposal for review and approval by the Arts Department Head prior to final enrollment in this course. Students will receive training on goal-setting, and their efforts will strengthen their skills as an independent learner. During the course of the semester they will participate in activities around developing a themed portfolio of their work, and they will present their culminating product at Arts Night. In addition to working on their projects during designated class time, ISA students will have some after school and tutorial time requirements.